

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place the Congressional letter to Prime Minister Vajpayee into the RECORD.

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 30, 1999.

Hon. ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE,
Prime Minister of India, Chanakyapuri, New
Delhi, India.

DEAR MR. PRIME MINISTER: We are very disturbed by a recent Amnesty International report that thousands of political prisoners are being held in Indian prisons without charge or trial. In a democracy, there should not be political prisoners.

In addition, a group of political prisoners held at Nabha Security Jail wrote to the Sikhs earlier this year asking for help in getting them released. There are thousands of Sikh political prisoners being held in India. Some Sikh political prisoners have been held since 1984 without charge or trial. How can a country that proclaims its support for democratic principles continue to hold political prisoners?

Human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalsa wrote a report showing that tens of thousands of Sikhs were abducted, tortured, murdered, and declared "unidentified," then their bodies were cremated. After Mr. Khalsa published this report, he was kidnapped by the police and they killed him six weeks later, according to a witness. The police responsible for this act have never been punished, despite a court order. Neither has Swaran Singh Ghotna, the police officer responsible for the torture and murder of Akal Takht Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke, who was torn in half.

Mr. Khalsa's findings were confirmed by a recently-issued report from the Committee for Coordination on Disappearances in Punjab, which issued an "interim report" that identifies at least 838 cases of arbitrary execution and secret cremation. These are not the acts of a democratic country.

As members of the United States Congress, we will be watching with interest the actions that you take. If these kinds of acts continue, we will be forced to consider cutting off American aid and trade to India. We expect a democratic state like India to live up to the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Sincerely,

Edolphus Towns, Dan Burton, William Jefferson, Roscoe Bartlett, John T. Doolittle, Jack Metcalf, Sam Farr, George Radanovich, Eni Faleomavaega, Bobby L. Rush, James Traficant, Wally Herger, Gary Condit, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Peter King, J.C. Watts, Donald Payne, Cynthia McKinney, Brian P. Bilbray, Major R. Owens, Bernard Sanders, Richard Pombo, Albert R. Wynn, Carlos Romero-Barceló, James Rogan, Duke Cunningham, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, David McIntosh, Collin C. Peterson.

THE INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION ACT

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to join my colleagues from both sides of the aisle today in introducing the Intercountry Adoption Act. By providing for the implementation of the Hague Convention, this legislation will help unite American families with waiting children from around the world.

For years, American families have reached across cultural and national boundaries to embrace children through international adoption. In 1998 alone, almost 16,000 children were adopted by Americans from abroad. By signing the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, the United States and over 60 other nations recognized the importance of international adoption. The Hague Convention creates a structure to strengthen cooperation among nations in adoption and protects adoptive families from fraud and abuse.

Although the United States signed the Hague Convention in 1994, Congress has yet to ratify and implement the Convention. The Intercountry Adoption Act, by providing for the enactment of the Hague Convention, would strengthen the process that builds thousands of international adoptive families every year. Our legislation sends a strong signal that the United States is committed to providing permanent homes for its own children and for children all across the globe.

Mr. Speaker, the Hague Convention promotes cooperation among national governments, but its most significant impact is deeply personal. My own family was forever changed and enriched by the adoption of our two children from Korea. I am profoundly grateful to have Kathryn and Scott in my life. The legislation we introduce today will allow me to express my gratitude by aiding efforts to unite every waiting child in every nation with a "forever family."

SPANISH PEAKS WILDERNESS ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 13, 1999

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to make additional remarks regarding the bill H.R. 898, the Spanish Peaks Wilderness Act of 1999, which I had the pleasure of introducing and sponsoring in Congress this year.

This legislation will give permanent protection, in the form of wilderness, to the heart of the beautiful Spanish Peaks area in Colorado. The bill is cosponsored by several of my colleagues from Colorado, including Mr. SCHAFER, whose district includes the portion of the Spanish Peaks within Las Animas County. I am also pleased to be joined by Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. TANCREDO, and Mr. MARK UDALL of Colorado. I greatly appreciate their assistance and support.

Also, across the Capitol, Senator ALLARD has introduced an identical companion bill. I would like to extend my appreciation to the Senator for his active support of this worthwhile legislation. I would also like to thank Chairman YOUNG and Subcommittee Chairwoman CHENOWETH for their work in the Committee on Resources to get this bill through committee quickly and onto the floor.

Finally, I would offer a note of appreciation and thanks to the former Members of Congress whose efforts made today's legislation possible. First, approximately 20 years ago, Senator William Armstrong of Colorado began this worthwhile process by proposing wilder-

ness in Colorado, and in 1986, Senator Armstrong proposed protected status and management for the Spanish Peaks. His efforts set in place the foundation upon which today's bill is built. Second, I would like to thank the former Congressman from the Second District of Colorado, Mr. Skaggs. Together, he and I introduced this legislation in the 105th Congress, which passed the House but due to time constraints did not pass the Senate. The efforts by both of these individual legislators helped make this bill possible.

The mountains known as the Spanish Peaks are two volcanic peaks in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties. The eastern peak rises to 12,683 feet above sea level, while the summit of the western peak reaches 13,626 feet. The two served as landmarks for native Americans as well as some of Colorado's other early settlers.

With this history, it's not surprising that the Spanish Peaks portion of the San Isabel National Forest was included in 1977 on the National Registry of Natural Landmarks. The Spanish Peaks area has outstanding scenic, geologic, and wilderness values, including a spectacular system of over 250 free-standing dikes and ramps of volcanic materials radiating from the peaks. The lands covered by this bill are not only beautiful and part of a rich heritage, but also provide an excellent source of recreation. The State of Colorado has designated the Spanish Peaks as a natural area, and they are a popular destination for hikers seeking an opportunity to enjoy an unmatched vista of southeastern Colorado's mountains and plains.

The Forest Service originally reviewed and recommended the Spanish Peaks area for possible wilderness designation in 1979. The process since then has involved several steps, and during that time, the Forest Service has been able to acquire most of the inholdings within Spanish Peaks area. So the way is now clear for Congress to finish the job and designate the Spanish Peaks area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The bill before the House would designate as wilderness about 18,000 acres of the San Isabel National Forest, including both of the Spanish Peaks as well as the slopes below and between them. This includes most of the lands originally recommended for wilderness by the Forest Service, but with boundary revisions that will exclude some private lands. I would like to note that Senator ALLARD and I have made significant efforts to address local concerns about the wilderness designation, including: (1) adjusting the boundary slightly to exclude certain lands that are likely to have the capacity for mineral production; and (2) excluding from the wilderness a road used by locals for access to the beauty of the Spanish Peaks. Senator ALLARD and I did not act to introduce this bill until a local consensus was achieved on the wilderness designation.

The bill itself is very simple. It would just add the Spanish Peaks area to the list of areas designated as wilderness by the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993. As a result, all the provisions of that act—including the provisions related to water—would apply to the Spanish Peaks area just as they do to the other areas on that list. Like all the areas now on that list, the Spanish Peaks area covered by this bill is a headwaters area, which for all practical purposes eliminates the possibility of water conflicts. There are no water diversions within the area.